

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the office action dated March 26, 2004, applicant(s) respectfully requests reconsideration based on the above claim amendments and following remarks. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

After entry of this amendment, claims 10, 13, 14, 18-20, and 22-27 (a total of 12 claims) are pending in the application. In this response and amendment, claims 10, 13, 14, 18-20, 22, and 25-27 are amended, and claims 1-9, 11-12, 15-17, and 21 are canceled.

In the office action dated March 26, 2004, the examiner rejects claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11, 12, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Wang (US 6,635,505); rejects claims 3-6, 17 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wang (US 6,635,505); and rejects claims 2-16 and 22-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The examiner objects to the drawings, requiring proposed drawing corrections or corrected drawings, objects to the specification, and objects to claims 4, 5, 11-17, 21, 22, 25 and 27, all due to certain informalities. The examiner objects to claims 10, 13, 14, and 18-20 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would find these claims allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The examiner also states that claims 22-27 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Drawings

The examiner objects to the drawings due to various informalities; namely, that the Block 330 of Fig. 3 is redundant because the condition "Is $n < 3$?" is previously satisfied in Block 310, and that the formula recited in Block 320 of Fig. 3 is improper due to inclusion of both a plus and minus sign.

Applicant has attached to this response and amendment proposed corrections to Fig. 3 to address the above-referenced examiner objections. Applicant has further included proposed corrections to Fig's. 1 and 2 to address certain typographical errors found in these drawings during application review.

Specification

The examiner objects to the disclosure due to various informalities; namely, that the disclosure at page 9 of the Preliminary Amendment refers to Block 330 of Fig. 3, which is to be removed due to a redundant condition; that the disclosure at page 10 of the Preliminary Amendment includes an inappropriate designation "VIC;" and that the disclosure at page 10 of the Preliminary Amendment includes an inappropriate recitation to the "VCI" formula.

Applicant has amended the specification to address and correct each of the above-referenced examiner objections. Applicant has further included additional specification amendments to correct certain typographical errors found in the disclosure during application review.

Claim Objections

The examiner objects to claims 4, 5, 11-17, 21, 22, 25 and 27 due to various informalities. Applicant has addressed and satisfied all of the examiner's claim objections, as listed in paragraph 3 of the March 26, 2004 office action, in the claims pending after entry of this amendment.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 112

The examiner rejects claims 2-16 and 22-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant has addressed and satisfied all of the

issues surrounding the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as listed in paragraph 5 of the March 26, 2004 office action, in the claims pending after entry of this amendment.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

The examiner rejects claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11, 12, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Wang (US 6,635,505). Applicant respectfully traverses the examiner's rejections of claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11, 12, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as Wang does not disclose each and every element recited in claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11, 12, 15 and 16.

Applicant, however, has cancelled claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11, 12, 15 and 16 to expedite prosecution of this application and the issuance of a notice of allowance. Claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11, 12, 15 and 16 will be prosecuted in a continuing application.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

The examiner rejects claims 3-6, 17 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wang (US 6,635,505). Applicant respectfully traverses the examiner's rejections of claims 3-6, 17 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as obvious in view of Wang.

Applicant, however, has cancelled claims 3-6, 17 and 21 to expedite prosecution of this application and the issuance of a notice of allowance. Claims 3-6, 17 and 21 will be prosecuted in a continuing application.

Allowable Subject Matter

The examiner objects to claims 10, 13, 14, and 18-20 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would find these claims allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

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PATENT

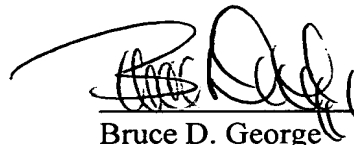
Applicant has amended claims 10, 13, 14, and 18-20, rewriting these claims in independent form to include all of the limitations of the respective base claim and any intervening claims.

Further, the examiner states that claims 22-27 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicant has amended claims 22 and 25-27 to resolve all of the issues surrounding the rejection of claims 22-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, applicant submits that pending claims 10, 13, 14, 18-20, and 22-27 (a total of 12 claims) are allowable and requests that examiner issue an early notice of allowance. The examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney in the event that a telephone interview will advance prosecution of this application.

Date: June 24, 2004



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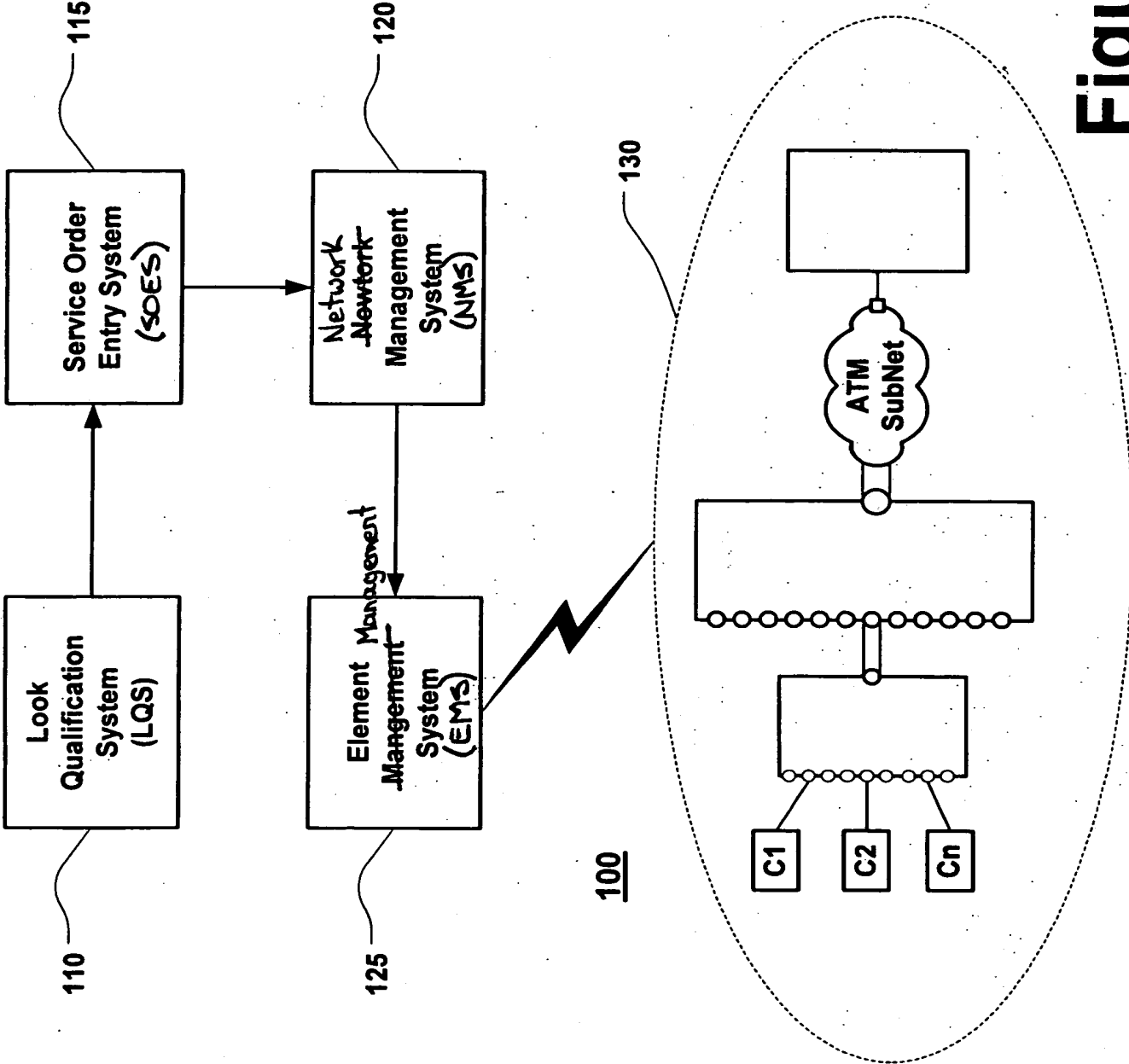


Figure 1



Annotated Marked-up Drawing 2/3

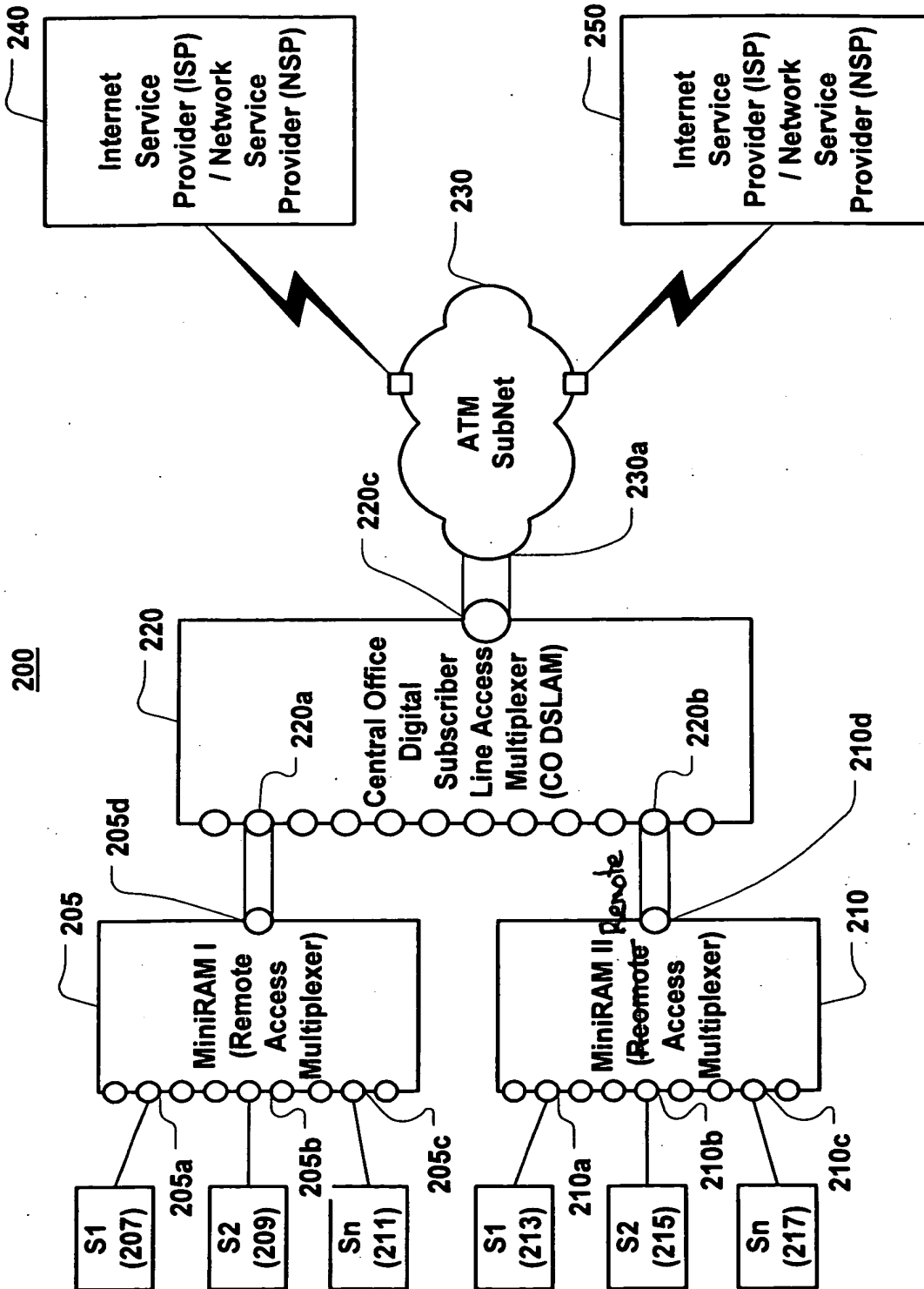


Figure 2



Annotated Marked-up Drawing 3/3

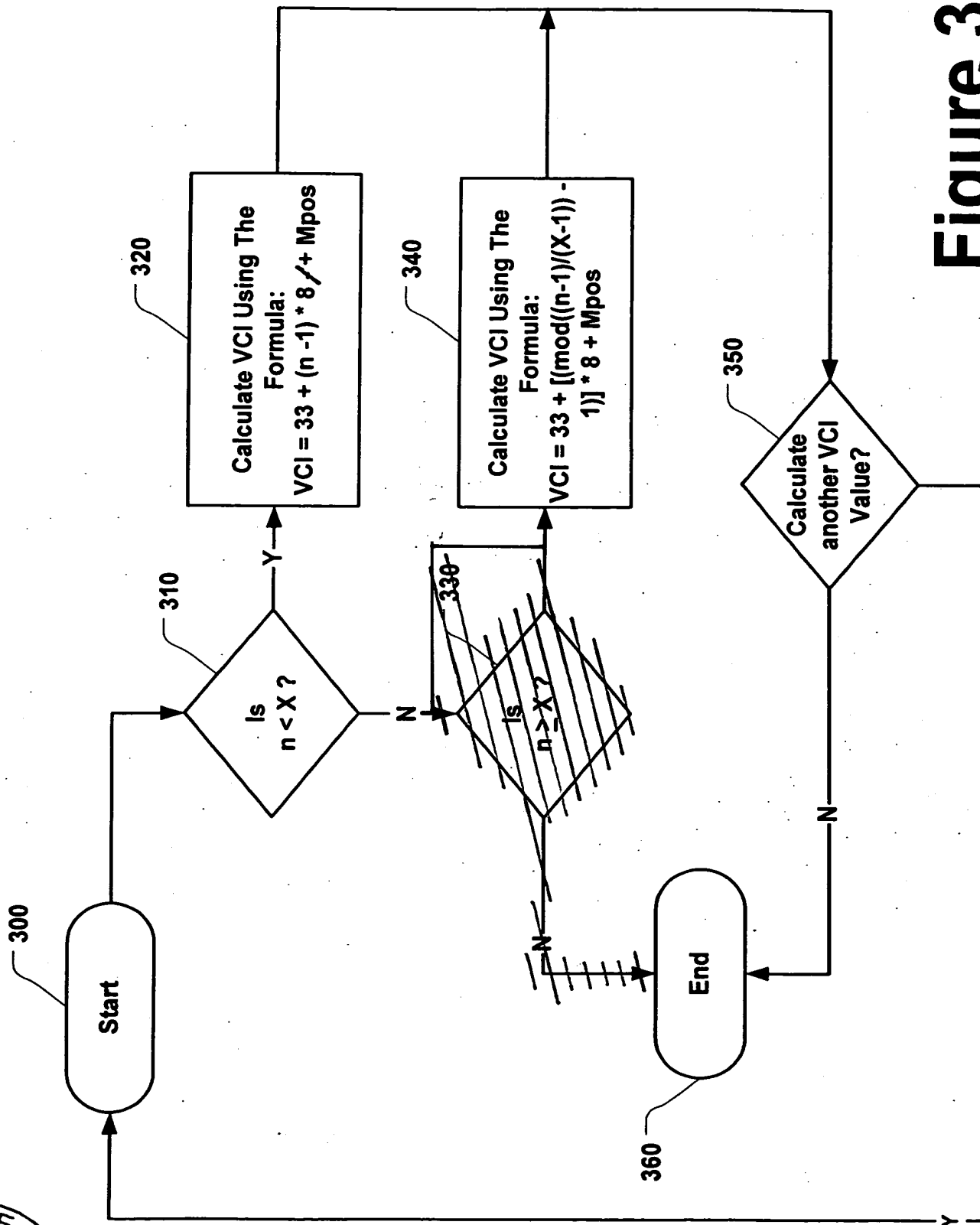


Figure 3

